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Christ In North Carolina, 1852-1902

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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1852-1902

By GRIFFITH A. HAMLIN

## INTRODUCTION

The Disciples of Christ in North Carolina were in their infancy in 1852. They were less than ten years old as a religious body within the State. The following fifty years were years of struggle to establish such institutions and organizations that would enable them to do more effective work and also to take their place with the older and more established churches in the State. Sunday schools, private schools, missionary organization, ministerial training and kindred items were born and grew into some degree of maturity during that half-century.

These pages are devoted primarily to the educational activities as manifested in the establishment of numerous private schools and, finally, a permanent college. Furthermore, the Disciples of Christ were committed to establish the kind of educational institutions and practices that would be in harmony with the ideas that had been set forth by their founding fathers. Since that educational heritage did have direct bearing upon the educational pattern they would attempt in North Carolina, it is important that their heritage be understood.

## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND HIS EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS

The church known as the Disciples of Christ was founded in Pennsylvania in 1809 by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander. Both men had come to America from Ireland where they had been ministers of the Presbyterian church. In an age of much controversy regarding theological beliefs as expressed in creeds, both Thomas and Alexander Campbell were impressed very greatly by the philosophy of John Locke who had written that the only requirement for membership in the Church of Christ "should consist of such things, and such things only, as the Holy Spirit has in the Holy Scriptures



declared, in express words, to be necessary for salvation.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Campbells inferred from Locke that all creeds were to be abandoned, and that the Bible alone contained sufficient instructions without the use of any creed or catechism. When Thomas Campbell wrote his famous *The Declaration and Address* in 1809, setting forth the new principles to be followed by the new church, its similarity to Locke’s statements is unmistakable.

There were additional factors, of course, that were influential in determining the kind of church the Campbells would establish. During his educational preparation at the University of Glasgow, for example, Alexander Campbell became closely associated with some leaders of the Haldane movement in that city. The Haldanes were interested in returning to what they regarded to be the correct practice of the church of the first century. Such things as the independence of local congregations, weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper and baptism by immersion became openly advocated by them. Those same practices were to become an integral part of the Disciples of Christ.

Alexander Campbell did not stop with the minimum essential of evangelism. He seemed to have a very high regard for education, even regarding it as a panacea for most of the ills of society. From his investigation of penitentiary records he concluded that the tendency toward crime among illiterates was fourteen times greater than among literates. He concluded that education would very greatly reduce crime if not eliminate it completely. It must be remembered that when Campbell spoke of education, he included therein what might be called “character education.” On one occasion he defined education as “the full development of man in his whole physical, intellectual, and moral constitution, with a proper reference to his whole destiny in the universe of God.”<sup>2</sup> His interest in education led him to be a crusader

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<sup>1</sup> John Locke, “A Letter Concerning Toleration,” Charles L. Sherman, ed., *Treatise of Civil Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration* (New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937), 177.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Campbell, *The Millennial Harbinger* (Bethany, Virginia [now West Virginia], 1830-1870), XX, New Series, Vol., 5, 1850, 123. Hereinafter cited as Campbell, *The Millennial Harbinger*.

for the establishment of common (public) schools in his State of Virginia. As a representative from Brooke County to the Constitutional Convention of 1829, 1830, Alexander Campbell introduced the only resolution calling for the legislature to establish "such common schools as will be the most conducive to secure for the youth of this commonwealth such an education as may most promote the public good."<sup>3</sup> When his resolution was rejected by the Convention, he wrote very indignantly that Virginia, once distinguished for her eminent statesmen, now "has sent her Magna Carta to the world without the recognition of education at all—without one word upon the subject, as though it were no concern of the state."<sup>4</sup> His efforts to promote common schools were not confined to the legislative halls. He welcomed every opportunity to speak before teachers' assemblies and thus to bring the need for education closer to the people. Furthermore, he worked out a curriculum that he believed should be followed by the whole system of education—through the common schools, academies, and colleges. His suggested curriculum was based upon seven "arts" which he maintained were basic for education: thinking, reading, spelling, singing, writing, calculating, and bookkeeping.

At the same Constitutional Convention in Virginia, Alexander Campbell presented another resolution in the field of education that sounds out of harmony coming from a Christian educator. He sought to include in the Virginia Constitution a clause that would make it impossible for the State of Virginia ever to grant a charter to any church group for the purpose of establishing a "Theological School." The reason was that Campbell opposed "theological speculation" as a valid method of arriving at religious truth. Only the explicit writings of the Scriptures should be the basis for a minister's education, in his estimation. Such an emphasis by Campbell was to have far-reaching influence across the United States in regard to the kind of schools and colleges that should be established by the Disciples of Christ. Should their colleges be strictly "Bible Colleges," or could they be more like "Lib-

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<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Virginia Constitutional Convention, 1829, 1830, 181.*

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, *The Millennial Harbinger*, XI, 1841, 431.

eral Arts Colleges"? In brief, the more conservative Disciples of Christ choose to establish and support "Bible Colleges." Names like Ozark *Bible* College, Cincinnati *Bible* Seminary, and, in North Carolina, Roanoke *Bible* College in Elizabeth City are typical. Such schools have not chosen to become affiliated with the Board of Higher Education of the Disciples of Christ. They have become the training centers for the group known as the "Independents" or "Churches of Christ."

It was in 1839 that Alexander Campbell announced his intention to open a new type of *Institution* on his plantation. The institution would include a printing press, a primary school, a college and a church. It seems apparent that his idea for such an enterprise came from contemporary "colony" experiments by such men as Fellenberg in Switzerland, Oberlin in France, and a great many in America. Perhaps the New Harmony enterprise, founded by Robert Owen, was the most famous in America. The printing press continued only during Campbell's lifetime, but the church and college (Bethany College) have continued to the present. Several North Carolinians attended Bethany College before a similar school was established in North Carolina.

There is much more that could be said about Alexander Campbell's keen interest and concern about education. What has been said, however, has been sufficient to indicate something of his desire for an educated ministry and laity, and also something of the kind of education that he believed was best.

#### CAMPBELLIAN IDEOLOGY ENTERS NORTH CAROLINA

There were three major ways by which the principles advocated by Alexander Campbell made their way into North Carolina. First of all, periodicals edited by him, beginning in 1823, soon found their way into North Carolina homes. In 1826 the first item from North Carolina appeared in the current periodical, *The Christian Baptist*, thus indicating written contact between two areas.

In the second place, and evidently much more vital, was the personal contact that Thomas Campbell, Alexander's father, made in North Carolina in his lecture tour of 1833.

For one thing, his visit to the State resulted in certain Baptist groups uniting with the Disciples of Christ. Twelve years after Thomas Campbell's visit to the State enough Free Will Baptist churches and ministers had adopted the principles of the Campbells that the Disciples of Christ consider his visit as the birth date of their organized work in North Carolina. Of the twenty-six ministers on the first roll of the Disciples of Christ in 1845, twenty-four were from the Free Will Baptists. The assimilation of the Free Will Baptists within the Disciples' fold brought many of the Baptist customs into the Disciples of Christ. One was the custom of having regular meetings of churches within a given geographical area. They were called "Union Meetings," and they usually met whenever a fifth Sunday occurred in a month. Often the previous Friday and Saturday were included too. Those Union Meetings were to become effective avenues through which the educational leaders could get to the mass constituency of the membership. Another group of Baptists who contributed to the membership and educational leadership of the Disciples of Christ were the Union Baptists. Two ministers of their church, John L. Winfield and C. W. Howard, joined with the Disciples of Christ around 1870 and became outstanding in educational work.

The third way in which Campbellian ideology entered North Carolina was through the person and work of the first educator-evangelist who was employed to work throughout all the churches of the Disciples of Christ within the State. His name was John Tomline Walsh, a Virginian, who began his work in North Carolina in 1852. His background made him well-qualified for his new duties. A number of years earlier, 1844, he edited in Richmond, Virginia, his first publication—*The Southern Review*.<sup>5</sup> There are no copies of that periodical known to be extant. Indications are that it was a secular journal including articles on religion. In 1848 Walsh moved to Philadelphia where he established a medical college and occupied the chair of anatomy and physiology. Those experiences in education, administration, and writing

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<sup>5</sup> Griffith Askew Hamlin, *The Life and Influence of Dr. John Tomline Walsh* (Wilson, 1942), 19.



were to be of value to him in somewhat similar tasks in North Carolina. Actually, it was in 1852 when Walsh moved to North Carolina that the story of private schools and Sunday School really begins for the Disciples of Christ. Prior to that time the churches had been primarily occupied with evangelism and establishing themselves. By 1852, under competent leadership, they could begin a larger program. This is not to imply that over-night there would come into existence private schools and Sunday Schools adequate in every way to meet the needs of the people. On the contrary, the first twenty years could best be described as a period of many failures and few successes.

#### THE STATUS OF CONTEMPORARY COMMON SCHOOLS AND DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES IN NORTH CAROLINA

The educational efforts of the Disciples of Christ in the years just prior to, and immediately following, the Civil War can be understood better in the light of contemporary educational work by the State and by churches. The first State-wide school system in North Carolina was established by the legislature in 1839. There were many weaknesses in that first school law. It did not state how school houses were to be provided. Nothing was said about the qualifications and employment of teachers. No mention was made as to when schools should begin and what subjects should be taught; nor was any provision made for a general authority at the head of the system for the purpose of guiding and advising superintendents, committee members and teachers. In spite of the weakness, however, public schools in North Carolina had come to stay. The financial arrangement was for the State to pay two dollars for every dollar raised by the counties through taxation. The first year's budget was \$3,600, with \$1,200 coming from counties and \$2,400 coming from the State treasury. By 1850 the budget was \$158,564.<sup>6</sup> One hundred and four thousand pupils were enrolled in 2,657 schools with 2,730 teachers. In 1853 an important step was taken when the legislature created the position of General Super-

<sup>6</sup> Charles Lee Smith, *The History of Education in North Carolina* (Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1888), 169.

intendent of Common Schools. Calvin H. Wiley was appointed to fill that position, and he remained in office until 1865. Wiley generally is credited with founding the present educational system in North Carolina. He soon made it obligatory for teachers to be certified before employment and he also recommended books for teachers and pupils. At first the wealthier people did not patronize common schools. Those who could afford it sent their children to private schools and academies. However, with the passing of years, common schools became more firmly entrenched, and parents increasingly turned to them for the education of their children. As that happened, private schools and academies decreased for lack of patronage. That change did not take place appreciably, however, until the late years of the last century. But it was to have direct bearing upon the private schools of the Disciples of Christ and of all other religious bodies.

The beginning of denominational colleges might be ascribed to the great religious revival that swept through North Carolina in 1810 and 1811, resulting in a desire of the churches to establish colleges that would be orthodox in doctrine. The Baptists took the lead in that movement, followed by the Presbyterians and Methodists. Wake Forest opened in 1834; Davidson in 1837; Trinity in 1851. Those denominational schools were under way before the Disciples of Christ were scarcely established as an organized body in North Carolina.

#### EARLY FAILURES AND SUCCESSES OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The first attempt of the Disciples of Christ to establish an educational institution in North Carolina was in 1854. John Walsh was the leader in that crusade. The tentative plans called for a Female Institute to be established in Hookerton. An urgent appeal was written by Walsh in his periodical. The appeal was entitled "The Hookerton Female Institute," and it ran thus:

Why should we be behind all other denominations in the State, with reference to schools and colleges? Can any good reason be given? Why should we help build up institutions of learning

for other denominations and send our children to them to be *secularized*? We have followed this suicidal pattern long enough. We can have a female school of high order, and *we must have one*. Many brethren are now ready to act in this matter. We want no small affair. Let us have a school worthy of public patronage—one free from all *sectarianism*. And Hookerton is the place for such a school. It is central and healthy. We would suggest that all the friends of such a school, who can make it convenient to do so, attend the Union Meeting to commence on Friday before the fifth Lord's Day.<sup>7</sup>

Several statements in the above quotation need to be amplified. In the first place, the stated intention to make the school free from all sectarianism was in accord with the Campbellian meaning of that term. That is, the desire was for no particular opinions to be advocated as the source of religious truth. If they were to teach Christian truth, the Bible alone should be the source book for it.

The second important statement is in regard to Hookerton being central. The Disciples of Christ were confined mainly to the eastern third of the State. That was due, in part, to the fact that Thomas Campbell had preached in that area, and also because that was the location of most of the Free Will Baptists out of which the Disciples of Christ had developed. Therefore, when Hookerton is described as central, it meant that it was central to that eastern part of the State, and not to the State as a whole, for Hookerton was not over seventy-five miles from the Atlantic coast, but four hundred miles from the western boundary of the State.

In the third place, it can be seen that the Union Meetings, inherited from the Baptists, were coming to have increasing significance. They provided a very effective medium for taking any proposal directly to the constituency of the churches within a given geographical area. Such meetings have continued to be a highly effective promotional medium to the present day.

In addition to soliciting funds from the Disciples of Christ, an appeal also was sent to the Baptists. The Baptists were reminded that when they established Chowan Female Insti-

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<sup>7</sup> John Tomline Walsh, ed., *The Christian Friend* (Wilson, Goldsboro), January, 1854, 121.

tute in Murfreesboro in 1848, they had solicited funds from among the Disciples of Christ. Now the Baptists were given a chance to reciprocate. Plans for the Hookerton school went to far as to organize a Board of Trustees. The officers of the Board were: John P. Dunn, President; Winsor Dixon, Vice President; George Joyner, Secretary; William Dixon, Assistant Secretary. To the disappointment of the enthusiasts funds were slow to be realized, and the project finally was dropped. The Disciples of Christ had failed in their first venture to establish a school. It should be remembered that it was a rather ambitious project for such a small group—less than five thousand. Furthermore, the Disciples of Christ were a loosely-knit body without any means of assessing the members for an enterprise involving financial support.

Three years later, 1857, there was another attempt to establish a boarding school for young ladies in Farmville. Even after three thousand dollars had been pledged the school was not founded. Shortly after that second failure Walsh himself attempted to establish a school for girls in Kinston, but he, too, was unsuccessful. He claimed that he had received in pledges about nine thousand dollars, and that its failure was "a monument to our folly as lasting as the hills, or the pyramids of Egypt." Such words are reminiscent of the indignation with which Alexander Campbell had criticized the failure of Virginia to establish common schools nearly thirty years before.

### THE FIRST TASTE OF SUCCESS

After the failure of John Walsh to establish a school in Kinston, the attempt was revived by several others in 1860. The school was established, and Walsh was made the principal. It is credited with being the first school established by a member of the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina for the purpose of educating young ladies. The first term began in January, 1860, and continued through June. The second term began on July 23, and closed on December 21. The official name of the school was the Kinston Female Seminary. A survey of the course of instruction indicates that it included



both elementary and higher branches of study. The list of courses and the cost were written as follows:

ELEMENTARY — Spelling, Reading, Writing, Primary	
Geography and Arithmetic .....	\$8.00
HIGHER ENGLISH — Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic,	
History, Geology, Natural Philosophy,	
and Chemistry .....	10.00
The above, including moral and mental philosophy,	
logic, Rhetoric, Algebra and Astronomy ....	12.00
THE LANGUAGES — French, Latin and Greek	
five dollars each .....	15.00
MUSIC — on Piano, with use of instrument .....	17.00
On Melodeon, with use of instrument .....	12.00
EMBROIDERY, ETC. — Five dollars each.	
Wax flowers .....	10.00
CONTINGENT EXPENSES .....	.25 <sup>s</sup>

The announcement added a footnote that a few small boys of good moral character would be received under the special charge of the principal. Furthermore, it added that when parents have both boys and girls, and wish to enter the boys, they will be expected to enter the girls also; and when the girls are sent to other schools in Kinston, the boys would not be received.

After one year the Civil War began, and the Kinston Female Seminary was disbanded. During the years of the War there is no record of any private educational institution in North Carolina being conducted by a member of the Disciples of Christ. Immediately after the War there were two schools, but very little can be learned about them. One was a school conducted by Joseph Foy in Stantonsburg from 1865 until 1870. Foy's prominence as an educator, however, was to come a few years later. Likewise, another rising young educator of that period, Joseph Kinsey, conducted a school in Pleasant Hill, Jones County, just after the Civil War. But very little is known about it except that among his pupils was Furnifold M. Simmons who later became a distinguished senator from North Carolina.

<sup>s</sup> "Semi-annual Announcement of Kinston Female Seminary," John Tomline Walsh, ed., *Carolina Christian Monthly* (Goldsboro), May, 1860, 120.

Such was the first phase of the attempt on the part of the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina to establish private schools. The number of failures far outnumbered the successes. The people soon were to become school conscious, however, and the final quarter of the century was to witness a rapid growth and integration of efforts.

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

Students of North Carolina history are familiar with the fact that the year 1870 witnessed the impeachment of Governor William Woods Holden. The remainder of his term was filled by Lieutenant Governor Tod R. Caldwell who succeeded himself and died in office. The remainder of Caldwell's term was filled by Lieutenant Governor C. H. Brodgen. The next governor, Zebulon B. Vance, who took office on January 1, 1877, succeeded in restoring an orderly and progressive state government. Declaring that it was impossible to have an effective school system without providing for the training of teachers, Vance asked the legislature to establish a normal school for white teachers and one for Negro teachers. The legislature accepted his request. A school for white teachers was established at the University of North Carolina, and one for Negro teachers at Fayetteville.<sup>9</sup>

By 1884 a state teachers' organization had been established, adopting the name North Carolina Teachers' Assembly. It has had a continuous existence, developing into the North Carolina Education Association. The 1887 Teachers' Assembly met at Morehead City in a building that had been erected that year at a cost of about three thousand dollars. The major portion of that cost was borne by Julian S. Carr, North Carolina's first millionaire. The building at Morehead City served as the central meeting place of the Teachers' Assembly until its destruction by fire in 1894. In spite of all those apparent progressive movements in the direction of better public schools, it should be noted that in 1880 North

<sup>9</sup> The Fayetteville school is the oldest institution in the South devoted exclusively to the training of Negro teachers, Lefler and Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 501-502.

Carolina spent less than \$2.00 per child for education.<sup>10</sup> Private schools still had their place in helping to meet the educational needs of the people. The Disciples of Christ, like other religious bodies, fostered such schools.

As a result of the Civil War there were many war orphans. In the 1873 General State Convention of the Disciples of Christ it was proposed that "a Committee on High School be organized and instructed to report a plan for establishing a High School, with an Orphan Department, at our next meeting."<sup>11</sup> The Committee appointed was R. W. King, Dr. F. W. Dixon, R. J. Taylor, J. J. Harper, George Joyner, Josephus Latham and J. H. Foy.

The next year the Committee reported as requested, and recommended a plan to establish the high school with an orphan department. *It was to be under the supervision of the General State Convention*, and not just operated privately by an individual. That was a significant and progressive suggestion by the Committee. The plan called for the formation of a stock company with the total capital to be not less than ten thousand dollars—in shares of twenty-five dollars. If any church or individual donated two hundred dollars or more to the school, it would be privileged to keep one pupil in the school free of tuition. Finally, the Committee requested that a Board of Education be appointed by the Convention Chairman to try to raise the ten thousand dollars by the next Annual Meeting. The Chairman appointed Joseph Foy, J. L. Winfield, Dr. H. D. Harper, S. H. Rountree, and Dr. F. W. Dixon to serve on the Board of Education.

The lack of anticipated support prohibited the proposed High School from being established. In 1875 the project was dropped entirely. The statement was to the effect that from the spirit manifested by the people, no school could be inaugurated "under the specific control of the brethren" for the present. Words of high appreciation were expressed regarding the teaching activities of Joseph H. Foy in Wilson

<sup>10</sup> C. W. Dabney, *Universal Education in the South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), I, 114.

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings, 1873, Annual Convention, North Carolina Disciples of Christ*, hereinafter cited as *Minutes of Proceedings*.

and Joseph Kinsey in LaGrange — two educators of the Disciples of Christ who were rising to prominence. Kinsey operated his own school, and Foy was principal of the male division of Wilson College. Sylvester Hassell, prominent Primitive Baptist leader, was president of the college.

Foy and Kinsey were not the only ones prominent in educational work during that period. Other individual Disciples of Christ were making their reputation as teachers and administrators. One such educator was Josephus Latham who served for a while as superintendent of education in Pitt County. Later he conducted a school of his own near Farmville. In May, 1876, John Walsh wrote that "Brother Latham is now conducting a school in Farmville, Pitt County, which is in a prosperous condition. He is a popular teacher whose greatest proficiency is in mathematics rather than philology or the languages."<sup>12</sup>

Another teacher of note was Curtis W. Howard. Originally a Union Baptist, Howard turned his attention to the Disciples of Christ under the tutelage of Joseph Foy. After his academic preparation he taught mathematics in the Kinston Collegiate Institute operated by Dr. R. H. Lewis, a Baptist. During the 1877-1878 session Howard was listed as an assistant to principal Lewis. In 1890 he became superintendent of schools for Lenoir County, maintaining that position for sixteen years.

A layman, Dr. F. W. Dixon, operated an educational institution known as Clarella Institute in Snow Hill. Dixon had been a student at Bethany College, founded by Alexander Campbell, and later he entered medical practice. Very little is known about Clarella Institute, but the records indicate that it was in operation during most of the 1870's. Each session was for twenty weeks. The course of study was probably on the elementary level.

The question might well be raised regarding the value of these various schools in the education of the ministry. Those schools were on the elementary level only, and offered no special training for the ministry. To receive special ministerial instruction it was necessary to go out of the State and attend a college such as Bethany or Transylvania. That is

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<sup>12</sup> John Tomline Walsh, ed., *The Watch Tower* (Kinston), May, 1876, 9.



not to say that the ministers in North Carolina received no specific instruction of any kind. In spite of the lack of institutional education there were several channels through which instruction was offered especially for ministers. John Walsh used the pages of his monthly journals to include specific instructions for ministers. One such article was entitled "Rules for Preachers" in which he discussed the ethics of a minister, and the preparation and delivery of sermons. Again, in 1884, just two years before his death, Walsh wrote his "Rules of Interpretation" in which he stressed the importance of discovering the meaning of the words "as they were employed by the sacred writers of the Old and New Testament."<sup>13</sup>

Next to John Walsh, Joseph Foy was probably the most significant influence in helping ministers. In 1889 Foy published a manual that was destined to be used by ministers for half a century. It was *The Christian Worker—A Practical Manual For Preachers and Church Officials*. Its 189 pages were devoted exclusively to suggestions and recommended procedures for ministers in the performance of their duties. The value of such a manual was enhanced by the fact that very few of the ministers had attended an educational institution that would have taught them the formal aspects of the ministry. Eight years before the publication of his manual, Foy and Calvin H. Wiley were awarded honorary doctorates by the University of North Carolina. Among Foy's pupils were Charles Brantley Aycock, Josephus Daniels, Frank Daniels, Rudolph Duffy, James W. Hines and James Y. Joyner. The biographer of Aycock has written that Foy encouraged young Aycock to such an extent that Aycock "never failed to acknowledge the interest which this instructor took in him."<sup>14</sup> Josephus Daniels wrote of Foy that ". . . it is doubtful if a more brilliant teacher lived in North Carolina in the seventies

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<sup>13</sup> John Tomline Walsh, *The Living Age* (Kinston, 1884, 1885), November, 1884, 295.

<sup>14</sup> R. D. W. Connor and Clarence Poe, *The Letters and Speeches of Charles B. Aycock* (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Page and Company, 1912), 19.

and eighties.”<sup>15</sup> In his later years Foy was given a pension through the Carnegie Foundation largely because Josephus Daniels personally brought the matter to Carnegie’s attention, and the rules and regulations were waived to permit Foy to be included.

### ATTEMPTS AT PERMANENCY

Beginning about 1890 there was a great revival for public education in North Carolina. The North Carolina Teachers’ Assembly, along with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, for several years had been crusading for the establishment of a normal college for women where teacher training could be obtained tuition free. The normal department of the University of North Carolina was for men only, but two-thirds of the public school teachers were women. Accordingly, a normal school for white women was established in Greensboro in 1891.

It was with the inauguration of Charles B. Aycock as governor in 1901 that a new chapter began in the history of education in North Carolina. As a result of Aycock’s work, the number of towns and cities that established schools between 1901 and 1910 increased from 42 to 118. With the increase in efficiency and standards for public instruction, private schools of inferior quality began to disappear. Only the stronger church-related colleges continued to prosper.

The Disciples of Christ in North Carolina gave evidence that they were conscious of their need for a college. In the General Convention of 1886 the Committee on Education charged that some Disciple students who go to other denominational colleges “come home prejudiced against the Church of their parents, and in some instances cannot even commune with the mothers who nursed them in infancy”.<sup>16</sup> As a result, it was decided in 1891 that the President of the General Convention should appoint a Board of Trustees of fifteen persons

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<sup>15</sup> From a letter to C. C. Ware, April 22, 1927, from Josephus Daniels, Raleigh, N. C., pertaining to Dr. Joseph Henry Foy, C. C. Ware, *History of the North Carolina Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis, Missouri, Christian Board of Publication, 1927), 169.

<sup>16</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings*, 1886.

whose duty it would be to erect buildings and exercise general supervision of a school. The Chairman of that Board of Trustees was J. L. Winfield. Desiring to bring about tangible results quickly, the Trustees erected what was known as Carolina Christian Institute in the Old Ford community of Beaufort County. The Institute opened September 26, 1892, and lasted for one session only. During the year of its existence it served to instruct a few older students who came there. Six ministerial students were enrolled. The Institute had only two teachers, no dormitory, and issued no catalog. It had the distinction of being the first school of the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina to which a financial contribution was made from the treasury of their General State Convention. The sum of \$60.00 was approved, and it was the first time that a Convention, as such, had given financial support to a school.

During the ensuing year the Board of Trustees sought a better location which might become a permanent establishment. Several towns offered inducements for a college to be established in their vicinity. After due deliberation, the town of Ayden was selected. The proposition offered by Ayden was one hundred dollars and five acres of land. To encourage ministerial students, the Convention approved that all ministerial students would be received tuition free. The new school was named Carolina Christian College. It opened its doors on September 18, 1893, occupying a frame building that had been erected that summer. The catalog of the college listed the faculty as Prof. L. T. Rightsell, Mrs. Rightsell, P. S. Swain, J. R. Tingle, and Mrs. Mollie Winfield. Seventy students were enrolled that first year. Actually, the school was not a college in the sense that the term is used today. The course of study consisted of secondary English, history, mathematics, music and Bible. No degrees were granted. It was more on the order of a high school, serving a community in which there was no high school operated by the state. The school grew, however, until in 1897 the enrollment had reached one hundred-forty, with a financial expenditure of about eight hundred-fifty dollars. It appeared that Carolina Christian College was on its way to becoming the permanent educational institution

owned and operated by the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina. Upon the death of President Winfield in 1897, Asa J. Manning was called to fill that office. Manning continued to administer its program until it went out of existence five years later in 1902. At that time the property was sold, with part of the proceeds going to the Ayden Church, and the remainder going to establish a new college in Wilson. The choice of Wilson as the final location of the permanent college was a phase of development that demands a more detailed explanation.

### WILSON IS CHOSEN FOR PERMANENT COLLEGE

There were two factors that led to the choice of Wilson as the location for the permanent educational institution of the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina. One stems from the removal in 1897 of the Kinsey Seminary from LaGrange to Wilson. An educational association in Wilson was familiar with the quality of work that Kinsey had been doing for several years in LaGrange, and the Association reached an agreement with Kinsey whereby it would erect a large building for occupancy by the fall of 1897. The building was erected at the edge of the city at the cost of twenty thousand dollars. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for the new Kinsey Seminary in Wilson consisted of George Hackney, Joseph Kinsey, George D. Green and Jonas Oettinger. The school opened on its new location September 15, 1897. For four years the Seminary operated most successfully but Kinsey's health began to fail after nearly thirty-five years of educational work. Furthermore, the financial responsibility was becoming increasingly great in the maintenance of an institution which appeared to be the leading institution of learning in eastern North Carolina. Consequently, Kinsey Seminary closed in 1901. It was an opportune time for some church body to acquire the property and make it into an educational enterprise of the first order. It was fortunate for the Disciples of Christ that they were able to make the acquisition.

The second factor that favored Wilson as the choice for an educational institution was that the city had been an edu-



cational center in eastern North Carolina. *The State Chronicle* of May 31, 1889, stated that even before the Civil War, Wilson had become the educational center of a large section, as well as the commercial depot. The Primitive Baptists largely were responsible for the educational growth of the community. The first church known to be established in Wilson County was Primitive Baptist. It was founded in 1754 as Toisnot Baptist Church. For practically one hundred years all churches of Wilson County were Primitive Baptist. In 1867 *Zion's Landmark*, the official publication of the Primitive Baptists, was founded in Wilson and has continued through the years. A brief listing of the various schools that had been established in Wilson indicates something of the educational significance of that town.

1. Toisnot Academy was incorporated under the laws of North Carolina in 1846. It did not begin operation until 1853, and then under a different name. The date is significant, in that it indicates the earliest known attempt at formal education in the township of Wilson.
2. The Wilson Male Academy, 1853-1863, was the outgrowth of the proposed Toisnot Academy.
3. The Wilson Female Seminary, 1853-1859, might be regarded as the counterpart of the contemporary Male Academy.
4. The Wilson Male Academy, 1859-1861, was a project of Methodist educators. It overlapped the other Male Academy in point of time.
5. The Wilson Female Seminary, 1859-1865, was operated by Methodists. The founder was Charles F. Deems who established the Church of the Strangers in New York City in 1866.
6. The Wilson Female Seminary, 1868-1875, was the first school to be established in Wilson after the Civil War. It was Primitive Baptist in leadership.
7. The Wilson Collegiate Institute, 1872-1875, was reopened two years after it closed and remained in operation until shortly before Kinsey Seminary was established—the forerunner of Atlantic Christian College. The Institute was the first to publish catalogs which are still in existence.
8. Wilson College, 1875-1877, was under the supervision of Sylvester Hassell. Joseph Foy assisted in the administration. His presence there was another factor in turning the atten-

tion of the Disciples of Christ toward Wilson as a place of educational opportunity. It was during the 1875-1876 session of the college that Charles B. Aycock, Josephus Daniels, Frank Daniels and John D. Gold were students there. It is worth noting that Wilson College, administered by a Primitive Baptist, did not contain any courses in Bible or religion in its curriculum. Neither have Primitive Baptists conducted Sunday schools or missionary societies in the usual sense of the terms. Being rather Calvinistic in doctrine they have minimized any works on the part of man to bring about conversion to Christianity. Nevertheless, the Primitive Baptists have sought to foster communities of high moral and intellectual development. In that respect they were similar to the Campbellian emphasis upon communities of high moral and intellectual culture.

9. The Wilson Collegiate Institute, 1877-1894, was a revival of the former Institute of 1872-1875. The new Institute continued in operation longer than any other school. For several years it was supervised by Silas Warren, a Primitive Baptist leader. When it finally closed in 1894, and subsequently no academic institution existed in Wilson for three years, this was the longest period in the history of the city of Wilson that there was no private school.

10. Kinsey Seminary, 1897-1901, was the direct antecedent of Atlantic Christian College. The Wilson Education Association purchased for the Seminary a tract of land bordered by the streets known as Whitehead, Lee, Rountree and Gold.<sup>17</sup>

### THE FOUNDING OF ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

When Kinsey Seminary came to a close in 1901 education-minded leaders of the Disciples of Christ saw an opportunity for making an important step in their scholastic program. Daniel Motley, the State Evangelist for the Disciples of Christ, wrote a series of articles entitled "Our Need of a College." In one article he pointed out that if a college could be established in North Carolina it would draw students also from South Carolina and Georgia in which there was no colleges operated by the Disciples of Christ.<sup>18</sup> By the time of the General State Convention in the fall of 1901 the stage was

<sup>17</sup> Charles G. Shreve, "Development of Education to 1900 in Wilson, North Carolina" (unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1941), *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> John Tomline Walsh, *The Watch Tower* (Washington), June 5, 1901, 1.





Kinsey Hall, built five years prior to occupation (1902) by Atlantic Christian College, which is to be demolished during the summer of 1956. This pen and ink sketch was made in January, 1956, by Professor Russell W. Arnold.



set for the acquisition of the Wilson property formerly used by Kinsey. It was agreed that the North Carolina Christian Missionary Convention (the legal name of the Convention of Disciples of Christ) would pay the sum of nine thousand for the property. Capitalizing upon the enthusiasm generated at the Convention, pledges were taken which contributed about three thousand dollars within twelve months. Dr. J. J. Harper was made the Chancellor. Serving with him on the Board of Trustees were Joseph Kinsey, B. H. Melton, D. W. Arnold, George Hackney, E. A. Moye, J. W. Hines, K. R. Tunstall, and J. S. Basnight. Dr. Harper took quite seriously his task of promoting the college throughout the churches in the State. On one occasion he wrote that he was grateful for the many small contributions, but that there were "many Disciples in North Carolina who could contribute large amounts, and large amounts are necessary to manage a large enterprise."<sup>19</sup> J. C. Coggins was engaged as the first president of the college. He travelled extensively among the churches, speaking on behalf of the college and soliciting funds for its support. The women of the Wilson church effected a plan for the furnishing of the thirty-three student rooms. The cost was \$30.00 per room. Following the example of the Wilson church, other groups throughout the State helped furnish the building. Nearly seven hundred dollars was raised by that method.

When Atlantic Christian College opened on September 3, 1902, the faculty numbered 9, and the enrollment was 185, of which number, 141 were women and 44 were men. Ten ministerial students were included. At the State Convention in the fall of 1902 the Trustees were empowered to issue bonds to cover the cost of the property and improvements amounting to eleven thousand dollars. Those bonds were fully paid in 1911.

The catalog of 1902 carried the names of the faculty and their respective academic departments as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> Joseph D. Waters, *The Watch Tower* (Washington), January 2, 1902, 4.

James Caswell Coggins, President, A.M., S.T.D., L.L.D.  
School of Bible Study  
Abdullah Kori, Syrian Linguist.  
School of Oriental Languages, Greek and Latin  
Glenn G. Cole, B.S., C.E., M.S.  
School of Mathematics and Science  
Miss Ruth M. Alderman, B.S., M.S.  
German, French, English Literature  
Luther R. Shockey  
School of Piano Music  
Miss M. Adele Martin, Mus. B., Mus. M.  
School of Vocal Music  
Miss Bessie Rouse  
School of Painting and Drawing  
Miss Christine Ornberg, B.O., M.O.  
School of Elocution, Oratory, and Physical Culture  
D. W. Arnold  
Bookkeeping and Business Forms <sup>20</sup>

Evidence of the exuberance with which the leaders planned for the future of the College is seen in their proposal to grant the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees as soon as demand would justify it. Those degrees were to be offered in the Language Department, supervised by Professor Kori, who was described as being "doubtless the ablest linguist of his age in America." Kori remained at the College for only one year, however, and the plans for advanced degrees did not materialize.

There was nothing in the academic pattern of the new college particularly different from similar schools of that time. The emphasis was on the languages, arts and Bible. The desire to offer advanced degrees doubtless was a result of enthusiasm that had been kindled to a degree far beyond what was merited by the financial resources and other factors necessary to establishing a college on a high academic standard.

From its beginning, Atlantic Christian College was coeducational in the sense that both men and women were admitted to the classes. In accordance with the prevalent practice of the times, however, the two groups were kept in strict separation from each other—even to the extent of separate dining rooms.

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<sup>20</sup> *The First Annual Catalogue of Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, N. C., 1902-'03* (Joseph J. Stone and Co., Greensboro, 1902).

With the establishment of the college in 1902, the long struggle for a Convention-owned educational institution came to successful conclusion. The Disciples of Christ in North Carolina at last had acquired an institution that would be able to serve their needs for a better educated ministry and laity.

In a sense, the Disciples of Christ had been driven to establish a first-class college because of the advancements in public education. Private schools and academies, operated by individuals, had become obsolete and no longer could attract the patronage of the public. Public schools had taken their place, leaving the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina with no choice but to establish an institution of higher learning on a basis that would insure permanence. With the establishment of Atlantic Christian College, the still relatively young Disciples of Christ in North Carolina were able to meet the educational needs of their people to much the same degree that the older religious bodies were meeting their educational needs.







